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Please see herein interesting industry information that may be relevant and valuable to you. If you would like more information on any comments noted herein please contact us directly and we will gladly expand or investigate further for you – please direct all enquiries to Graeme Impson on [graeme.impson@sctsolutions.co.za](mailto:graeme.impson@sctsolutions.co.za)

## Durban Port Congestion

The port congestion is ongoing and expected to normalise in 6 weeks' time. The current berthing delays have been as high as 8 days, however the time frame has now reduced to 3-4 days delay in vessels berthing and sailing. This situation can change at any time due to the equipment, weather situation and other unforeseen circumstances.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused, unfortunately it is beyond our control. We will keep you updated.

# WC Sars manager still missing in action

## Containers pile up

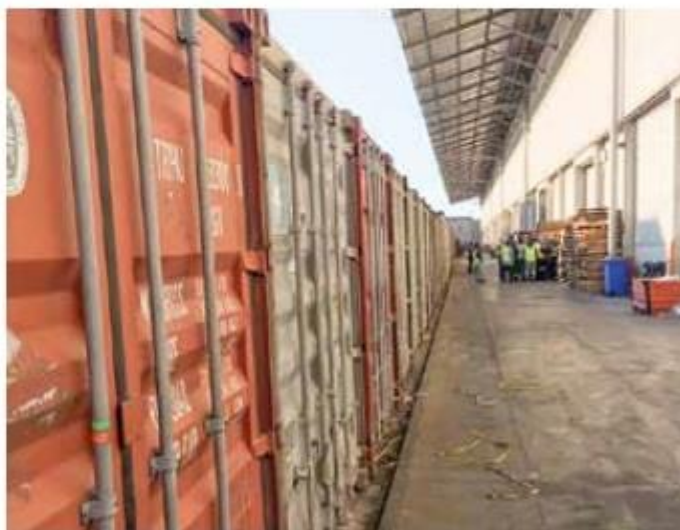
### Liesl Venter

Cape Town industry is fed up with Customs.

Numerous complaints have been lodged over the past few months and several meetings have taken place, but many issues remain unresolved while performance continues to deteriorate.

According to Mike Walwyn, chairman of the Port Liaison Forum, one of the major issues is the lack of a regional manager of the South African Revenue Service (Sars) in Cape Town.

"It is now close on two years that Cape Town has been without a Sars regional



An agent sent FTW this photo of 27 containers lined up for inspection last Friday.

manager," he told FTW.

Although the position has been earmarked as a priority by customs senior management in Pretoria and an acting manager has been deployed to the city to act as regional executive for the customs portfolio in the interim, the lack of a permanent person is being felt.

"Especially in the service level on the ground," said Walwyn. "Backlogs are not uncommon in clearing containers, which, in turn drives up costs for importers as customs simply do not have the manpower to deal with the number of examinations."

Various forums have been called upon to take up the issue with Customs and Walwyn said several meetings had been held with the revenue authority as more and more complaints had been pouring in.

In one case, a clearing agent said not a single official could be found manning a desk at the customs offices in Cape Town at 08h30 in the morning, while longer queues were becoming the norm as officials struggled with the workload.

"Cape Town Customs is very close to crisis mode," one clearing agent, who did not want to be named, told FTW. "The inexperience of officials is very clear. They simply just don't know what they are doing in some instances. Emails are returned with sender inboxes being full, phones just ring. It is a worrying situation."

Sars spokesman, Sandile Memele, told FTW they were aware of the customer complaints at the Cape Town customs office and had met with industry representatives in an effort to engage on a way forward.

"We have revised our operating hours to start at 07h30 and end at 16h30 and have allocated a dedicated resource to deal with daily queries," said Memele. "Regular meetings will also be held to address any concerns that impact on the quality of our service in place. In addition, if clients are not satisfied with the outcome of their query, they can request for the matter to be escalated to the executive responsible for the office. Clients can also register their concerns through the Sars contact centre, where all queries are registered, monitored and resolved."

He said front counters were merely for the reception of DA185 applications.

But this has also been problematic with the Cape Town office only managing to process around eight of these documents per day.

From FTW



We thank you for your continued support and partnership

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